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WOOD FLOORS AND THEIR CARE.

WE have received the following letter from a subscriber:

Although hard wood floors are so popular, and are used more and more every year, it is rather singular that so few people take the trouble to learn for themselves what is the most desirable floor for their rooms. For instance, what is the most suitable wood to use, what the most appropriate design, and, particularly, what is the best method of laying and finishing so conspicuous a part of the interior decorations?

The writer, who has had many years experience in floors and their care, would suggest to those who wish to save themselves a great deal of trouble and annoyance, that if they are building a new house not to have the hard wood floors contracted for with the other wood work of the house, but to get designs from their architect and estimates from some one who makes a special business of that particular branch of work, or to go to a manufacturer of the best floors and look over his patterns and select what seems to be in good taste and suitable for the different rooms of their house, just as one would select a carpet, and, by giving to him about the price they wish to pay, he can assist them very materially in their selection. They will certainly get a better and more artistic floor than if they had it left for the builder to do, who, very likely, only occasionally puts down floors and whose men are not experienced in such work, or the builder would probably sublet it to one of the so-called floor-layers for a very low price, which means one nail put in where there ought to be three, and the floor just skimmed over with the plane instead of being properly smoothed, scraped and sand-papered. The result is, it is impossible for the finisher to make a satisfactory job, and instead of the beautiful variation in the grain of the wood attracting the attention of the beholder, the first thing he notices is the ugly plane marks and the rough places in the floor which show out all the more the better the floors are finished.

This brings us to the consideration of the polishing and care of the floors after they are finished. The first thing to do after the floors are smoothed and sand-papered is to fill the grain of the wood thoroughly with some good patent filler, and I have found out that the grain of the wood is brought out much better by using a dark filler which fills in the soft porous parts of the wood, and when it is wiped off the close hard portions make a very pretty shading and contrast with the darker portions. After the filling is thoroughly dry and hard then comes the finishing. This is fully as important a matter as the proper selection of material for laying the floor, and is one that, if not properly understood, will cause no end of trouble and expense. The proper finish for a floor must be something that does not require the help of a mechanic each time it is used, and must be something that is simple, easily applied, and cheap. The idea of putting on something that dries hard like varnish or shellac, is, I contend, all wrong, because any hard substance must and will scratch up with the nails in the boots, every mark being permanent—at least it stays until the floor is again varnished, which those who have had experience know to be quite a job. Therefore the finish must be something that is soft without being sticky, so that whatever marks occur on the surface can be easily removed with a brush or cloth, something, in fact, that will work like the old-fashioned beeswax without the excessive work necessary to apply and polish it, and yet be free from the stickiness attending the use of that article. I found a wax finish answering these conditions, and, as I have acquainted the editor with the address of the manufacturers, doubtless he will put any one who wishes in communication with them. I myself would have considered it a very great advantage if I could have produced the article long before I did.

One other thing ought to be mentioned in connection with this article and that is the use of

castors on furniture. By no means should castors be allowed to be used on a polished floor, as the nicest floor ever laid would be ruined in a very short time by using castors upon it. Just think of it, only the smallest portion imaginable of the roller touches the floor, so that the whole weight of the piece of furniture and of the person upon it, rests on almost a point, and as a matter of course, a very little weight, even a chair, will make a dent in the floor, and once there it remains. Hence, if any one has new furniture made to be used on hard wood floors, all the legs and feet ought to be made so as to rest on the floor; they can then be pushed from one end of the room to the other without the least injury to the floor. If the furniture already has castors upon it, it is better to take them off and substitute some ornamental carved or turned feet. Castors are to facilitate the moving of furniture on carpets and are not needed on hard wood floors and will spoil any floor on which they are used.

To recapitulate:

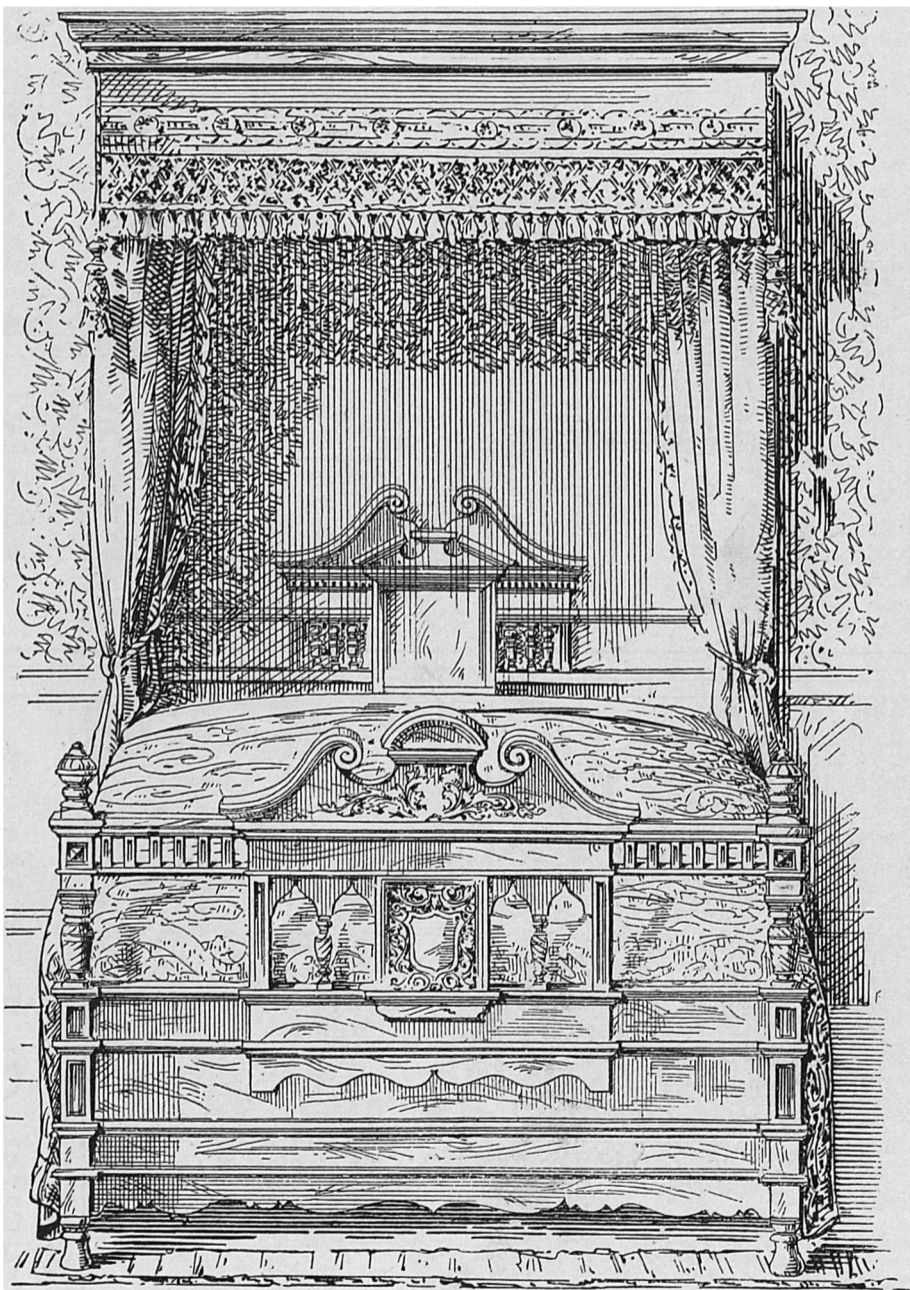
In the selection of floors there are these things to be considered:

First, The selection of woods—oak should, I think, constitute the main body.

Second, The method of fixing the pieces together and the care taken in the manufacture of the floors.

Third, The manner of laying and the pains taken in planing, smoothing and finishing the floors ready for the polisher.

Fourth, The proper way to fill and polish them.



CANOPIED BED.

Fifth, Not to allow furniture with castors to be used on hard wood floors.

I am satisfied that by following these suggestions, the floors will for years be an attractive part of the decoration of the house.

BOSTON ART DECORATIVE LEAGUE.

A SOCIETY of decorative artists showing motives in correspondence with the Art Workers' Association and the Associated Artists' in New York, united with other distinctly original ideas, is just established in the Emerson Building in Boston under very favorable circumstances. This establishment is conducted by Messrs. W. H. Aldrich and Edward Dewson, the latter being

known as chief of another organization of architects and art designers, associate editor of *The Artist*, and esteemed contributor to *THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER*. Three studio apartments fitted up by the new society, provide for making studies in general interior decoration, one room being for upholstery which is executed by themselves exclusively. Designing for artistic furniture, stained glass, draperies, repoussé, and art needlework is carried on in the other departments. The style of decoration distinguishing the largest of the rooms is worthy of note; its reddish toned wall hangings, in imitation leather of Queen Anne design, forming a most effective background for the oblong framed panels, showing metalized plaster groups in alto relievo which are among the specialties of the association.

A development being led by Mr. Dewson in the production of stained glass is likely to become important as it is already interesting. His inventive efforts have been based on the idea previously brought out with the Vassa Murrhina glass, without claim of fundamental originality. By a month's labor of this artist recently at the Cape Cod glass works, where every privilege of experiment was accorded, he has been enabled to obtain extremely novel effects of rich tapestry-like colors, through varying formulas in the combination of sulphurized silver, enamels and metals of different kinds. A brilliant example of the work is shown in some vestibule windows recently placed in a house on Commonwealth Avenue. As with the whirled glass of the Antique Glass Company of South Boston, the results here are accidental.

The rare effect of this glass seems to be in a measure dependent on the addition of a thin stratum of crystal glass above that in which the gold, silver, and precious stones are imbedded. In trailing clouds of color, formed in fine particles within the mass, is shown some technical resemblance to the *spruzzato* work in Venetian glass. The results obtained are to be commended, as is equally the mere idea of experiment.

Another special effort of the new company has been in the direction of combed effects in fresco decoration. A satisfactory form of the work is seen in the Beacon Hill Church, of which these interior designs have recently been completed. This decoration is of simple style, chiefly in rich olives, russets, and old gold in various shadings and blendings, with slightly Renaissance treatment. The combed or scrambled effect introduced has the merit of being inexpensive while rich and handsome. It is done by means of a series of brushes framed together somewhat like the crandle tools of ornamental stone-cutters.

It was first attempted by Mr. Dewson in a little church at Newtonville, Massachusetts, about a year ago. In the more recent ecclesiastical work, the frieze is given a body of rich gold yellow bronze, with decoration in water color of mingled purples put on with a coarse sponge which is rolled over the surface to give a mottled effect. The result, which is so largely accidental, is found pleasing.

THE art school heretofore known as the Brooklyn Art Guild, is now designated the Students' Guild of the Brooklyn Art Association, the management being similar to that of the Art Students' League of New York. The old rooms in Montague

Street are retained, with the addition of the top floor of the adjoining building. A men's day life class, a still life, and a free antique class are added to the former courses. The school is under the superintendence of Thomas Eakins, and has about sixty students. It is managed by a board of control consisting of members from the Art Association and the Art Guild, under an agreement which assures that the school shall be conducted in the interest of the students.

THE most fashionable fans just now are very large ivory or tortoiseshell, with ostrich feather leaves. The palm fans covered with flowers, the handles tied with a bow of ribbon, are pretty in decoration. These are also sometimes painted, and thus treated, are suitable for artistic work.